From the president 11/26/23

Thanksgiving break provides an opportunity to reflect about the past three months since the last NAPB newsletter. This happened for me work-wise, among others: international trip, conferences (I enjoyed meeting the Graduate Student Working Group at the Trisocieties meeting), proposal submission, PhD student defenses. In short, Thanksgiving break feels like stepping out of a roller coaster, slightly dizzy. I believe most feel the same, given the perceived “busyness” of everyone.

The months after the annual meeting are the time of leadership transition, both for the executive committee (EC), and most other NAPB committees and working groups, which went well overall. Various activities are going on – and will be reported in detail below. From an EC perspective, I benefit from the efforts of past presidents, several still actively involved. Ksenija Gasic has helped to create the NAPB web-site (https://www.plantbreeding.org/), and continues to support updating it.

Under the leadership of Hannah Senior, we started to receive administrative support from BT Professional Solutions LLC earlier this year, namely from Jim and Sherri Williamson (both attended the 2023 NAPB meeting). BT is helping NAPB to safeguard its institutional memory, an important task, given frequent (annual) leadership rotations. BT is providing Dropbox space to all committees and working groups to organize their files and to help with their annual transition process. More recently, BT has worked with ACSESS to generate permanent NAPB email addresses, such as president@plantbreeding.org, treasurer@plantbreeding.org, membership@plantbreeding.org (complete list: https://www.plantbreeding.org/leadership/). This will be beneficial both for long-term documentation of communication, and annual transitions.

This fall, EC decided to set-up 3-year NAPB memberships in addition to existing 1-year memberships (with help of ACSESS). This is particularly beneficial for student members, who can lock in a student rate, even though they may turn into an early career scientist during this 3-year period. Full members may benefit from inflationary savings, and have fewer renewals to deal with. We hope, 3-year memberships will help to stabilize and further increase NAPB membership numbers.

An important NAPB activity these days is development of the 2024-2028 strategic plan by a group of volunteers, led by past president Hannah Senior. We believe that NAPB has matured well in terms of membership numbers, healthy finances, and excellent annual meetings. A major question discussed in connection with the strategic plan is, in which novel ways NAPB can offer value to its members. Those ideas will be incorporated in a draft of the strategic plan, which will be shared with the NAPB membership for input. If you have suggestions on how NAPB could or should offer value to its members, please share them with president@plantbreeding.org, or past.president@plantbreeding.org.

“After the game is before the game” is a German soccer quote, meaning: don’t dwell on your last game, rather focus on preparing for the next one. This seems to also apply to organizing annual conferences,
even though we certainly try our best to accumulate and share knowledge from former meeting hosts (and the 2023 NAPB meeting was excellent). Preparation of the 2024 NAPB meeting co-hosted by Bayer (St. Louis) and University of Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) is in full swing. Co-hosts JD Rossouw and Martin Bohn and their team already held a couple of planning meetings. Stay tuned for the 2024 NAPB meeting: https://www.plantbreeding.org/files/images/napb/bayer-napd-digitalscreen-2809x1411.png.

NAPB will be represented at other events as well, such as the upcoming ASTA Row Crop Conference in Orlando in December: watch out for Donn Cummings and myself, see you perhaps there.

Have a fruitful December, and enjoyable Christmas and New Year holidays –

Thomas Lübberstedt